DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 119 351 EA 007 900

AUTHOR Blaustein, M. Lee
TITLE Planning for an Enrollment Drop!
PUB DATE Feb 76
NOTE 4p.; Speech given before the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (60th, Washington, D.C., February 13-18, 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Guides; Administrator Role; Budgeting; *Change Strategies; *Educational Administration; Educational Objectives; *Educational Planning; Elementary Secondary Education; *Enrollment Trends; Student Enrollment
IDENTIFIERS *Declining Enrollment

ABSTRACT

Faced with the prospect of declining school enrollment, educational administrators must take stock of the situation and outline plans for improving the quality of education in a period of reduced enrollment and possibly reduced state aid to local school districts. Planning principles that can help administrators in this task include the following: (1) be pragmatic and don't do all the planning alone; (2) establish a steering committee; (3) set a time line; (4) delegate tasks in a specific way; (5) establish a basic philosophy of quality education that will present long-range and short-range goals; (6) hold preliminary evening kaffee klatches; and (7) publish your accumulated guidelines and hold briefing sessions for everyone involved. Additional hints that can help get the job done include: (1) plan budget cuts each year on a descending basis; (2) consolidate and tighten programs while you have the time; (3) commit yourself to specific high-priority programs; (4) consolidate teacher needs gradually each year; (5) evaluate the value of all tasks and programs; (6) involve staff in all aspects of planning; (7) establish a planning priority for budget cuts; (8) search out innovative and valuable organizational patterns; and (9) create an opportunity for teachers to participate in the program evaluation process. (Author/JG)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED119351

PLANNING FOR AN ENROLLMENT DROP!

M. Lee Blaustein
Franklin High School
Somerset, N.J. 08873

Be brave--this can be the beginning, faced with the inevitable onslaught of reducing enrollment, there comes a time when all educators in positions of responsibility must stop -- take stock of the situation and begin to outline their plans for getting on to do the job we all were hired for -- to improve the quality of education.

In order to accomplish this task, it is vitally necessary to determine when planning should start. Symptoms, like those of the common cold, crop up from time to time and some indications, (increased budgets, movements of pupils from private and parochial schools to public schools) tend to mask and reduce the sound of the starter's pistol. So, you do your own research. You hang out symptom collectors across your State and your own community. Some of the symptom collectors you know -- here's a short tabulation of those I find most helpful:

* decreasing enrollments are first seen in K-3 grades coupled with a slight increase in grades 8-9.
* a general trend of decreasing state aid to local districts with possible sharp increases in tax rates.
* a general reduction in new homes or apartment building and in some cases a movement of local industry to more outlying areas.

Severe planning principles that we found to be helpful!

1. Be pragmatic, above all don't do the planning alone, touch all the bases by involving your staff, your pupils, your parents, your Board of Education and your community.

EA 007 990

2. Establish a Steering Committee, as a sounding board, as a directional group and as a base for motivating those you are to work with.

3. Set a time line - a perc chart is one of the better means of accomplishing this task.

4. With the help of your Steering Committee - delegate tasks in a specific way. Set up an organizational committee to divide the tasks.

5. Establish a basic philosophy of quality education that will present long and short range goals. Be sure that it is commensurate with your Board policy of Board of Education goals.

6. Hold a series of preliminary evening Kaffee Klatches in school with an open invitation to your public to come in. Present the problem of reduced enrollments as an opportunity to offer the best in education resulting from early foresight in planning. Invite the press to visit and request publicity.

7. Publish your accumulated guidelines and hold briefing sessions for all involved. Ignore the negative aspects -- you'll have enough of that in time. Attach yourself to the positives. The values that can be accrued from fewer pupils, more space, improved programs, selective staff and the like.

Like any educator who has lived through these planning steps, I would like to offer additional hints to get the job done with a little more ease. There are do's and don't's and cost a lot of graying hair and sleepless nights to accrue. Pick and choose those items which you can best apply to your own circumstances and remember, you are not alone, there are a lot of us who want to improve the important aspects of learning and if reduced enrollments are to be the vehicle, we must travel on, then it is up to us to ride first class cabin.

a. Plan your budget cuts each year on a descending basis.

b. Consolidate and tighten programs now that you have time, not pressure.

c. Commit yourself to specific hi-level programs and curtail those aspects of your programs that have been hanging around via the luxury route.

d. Consolidate your teacher needs each year so that the eventual reductions in staff is a slow, thoughtful one and will allow you to retain the best and prevent accumulation of the worst.

e. Evaluate tasks you assign to all. Question the effectiveness of programs and positions. Request value for the dollar.

f. Establish a PPC - planning priority for cuts.

g. Involve staff in all aspects of planning acts so that you don't become the target but rather the bow and arrow.

h. Search out innovative and valuable organizational patterns. Have teachers visit school systems with working programs -- sift out the ones you can use.

i. Create an opportunity for teachers to self-police the search for value.

j. Fly-speck every inch of your staff and expenditures -- do this on a regular share the headache basis.

Planning for an enrollment drop, at its best is a thankless and frustrating job much of the time. As a professional educator, I would like to be the one who directs this task, rather than leaving this to the lay community alone. The results should be better.